

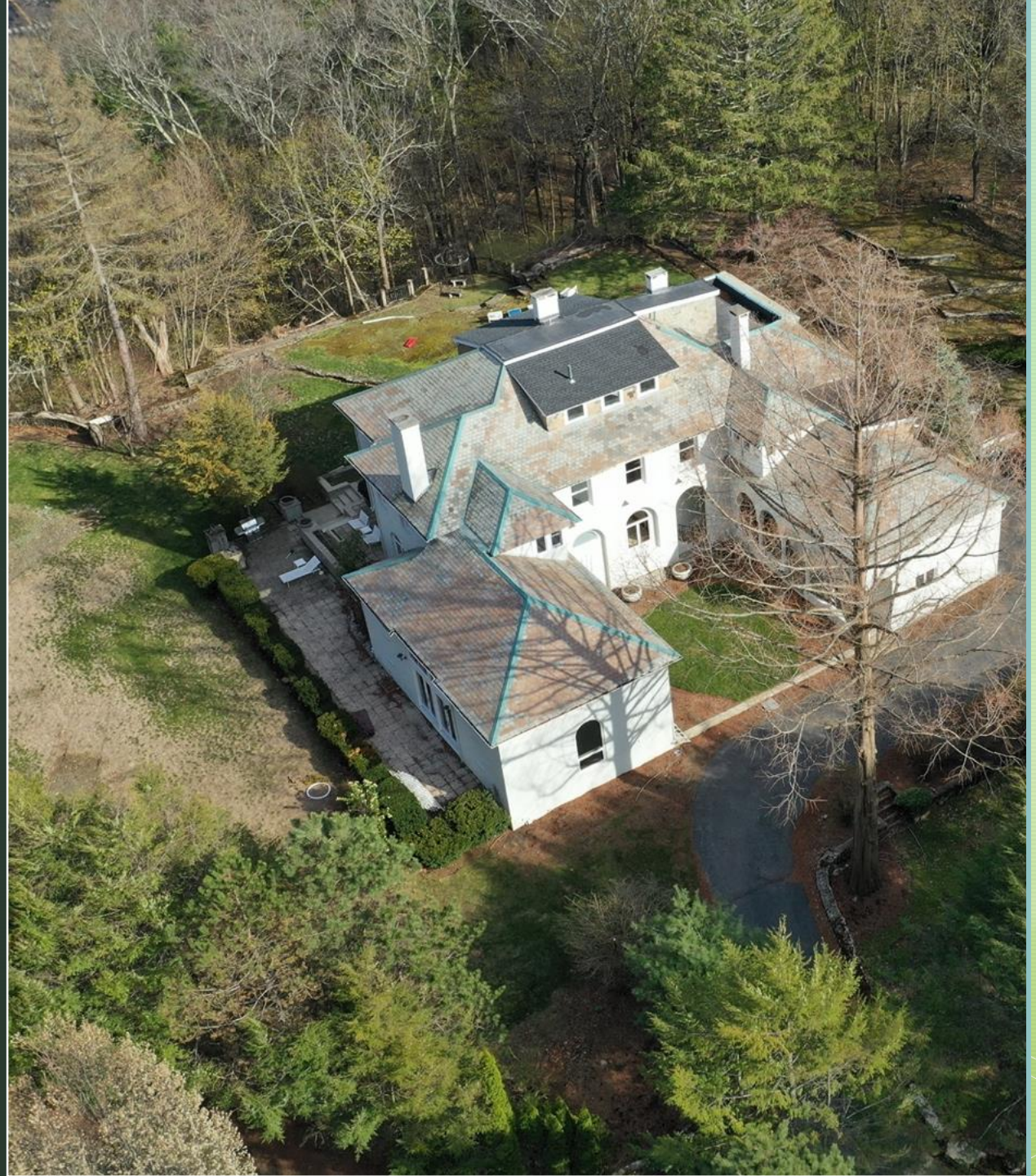


A Resident-Initiated Request To Establish a New Local Historic District

▸ Mount
Independence

Protecting Our History

The Creative Colony Atop Follen Hill



The Top of Follen Hill & The Robbins Estate



Daguerreotype of Eli Robbins' home in East Lexington with observatory on Mount Independence visible in background



Detail of observatory

Eli Robbins
(1786-1856)



The Top of Follen Hill & The Robbins Estate

The Observatory was a popular place to visit and walk. Eli Robbins constructed two drives up to the peak, one of which survives today as the Bridle Path.



Detail of observatory

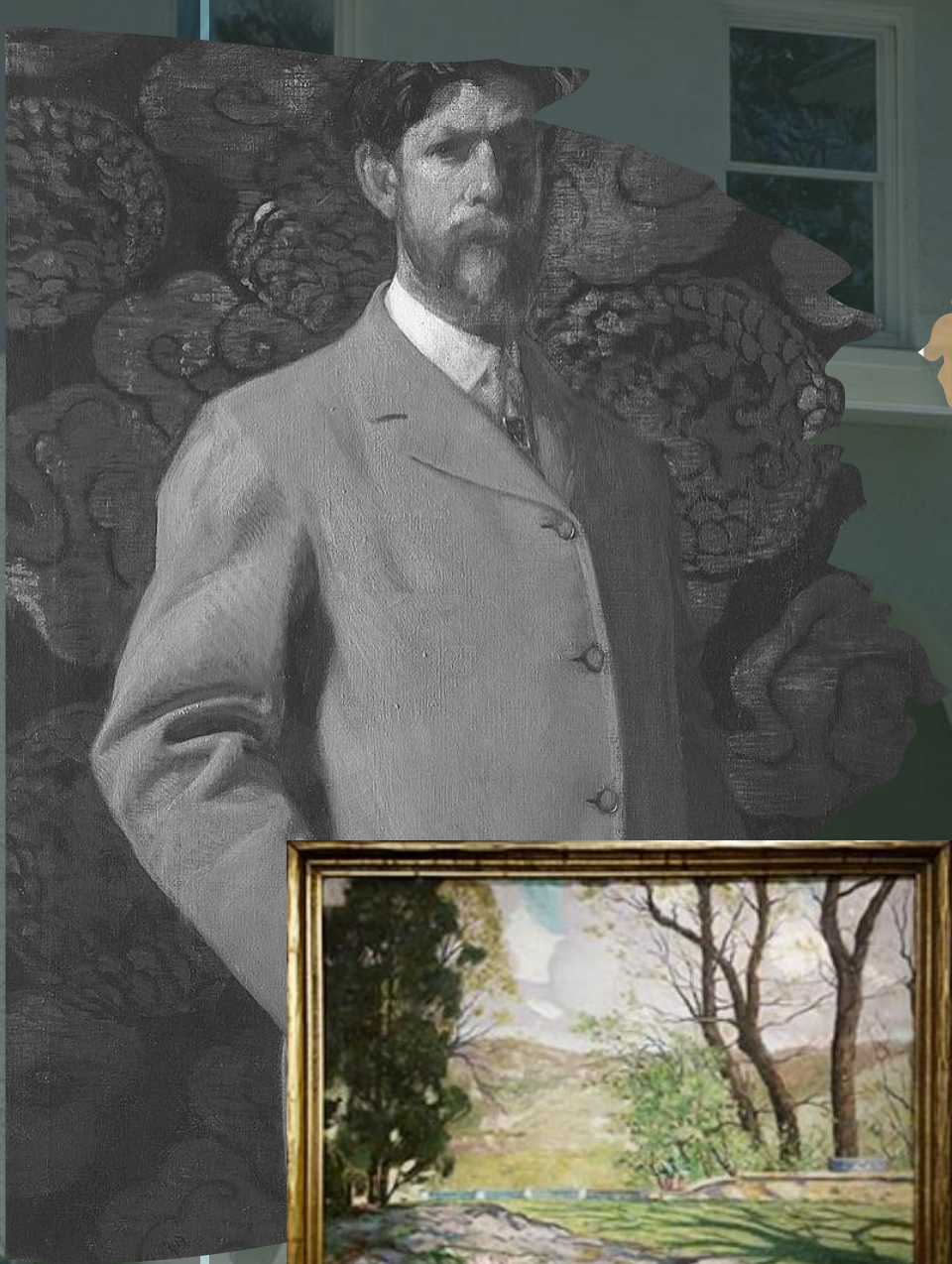
Eli Robbins
(1786-1856)



Bridle Path

- An historic public way, Bridle Path paralleled the north side of the hill then doubled back upon reaching the present Follen Road and finally ascended to the observatory.
- It is marked by stone walls laid a carriage-width apart

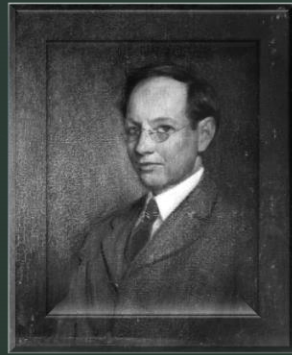




Hermann Dudley Murphy and
Nelly Littlehale Murphy, artists

12 Summit Road

Landscape design by the Olmsted Brothers



Frederick Law Olmsted (Jr.)

America's Notable Landscape Architect and his firm, The Olmsted Brothers

- "This property [12 Summit] is perhaps the finest example of early twentieth century landscape architecture in Lexington."



- Letters from the Library of Congress between the architect, Harold Hathaway and William Lyman Phillips (Project Superintendent at the Olmsted firm), and both Frederick Law Olmsted (Jr.) and his firm, The Olmsted Brothers.

LIBRARY

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

6379
OLMSTED BROTHERS
JUL 9 9 03 AM '18
323600
510 Belmont Street.
Watertown, Mass., Dec. 26, 1918.

Dear Mr. Olmsted:-
Out of curiosity to see how Mr. Murphy's plan was coming along, I dropped around to East Lexington Saturday, happened to find him there, and looked it over with him. He has done some wall building and made two or three changes from our plan, of which the principal one was to build a terrace wall in front of the house, about fifteen feet outside the drive, and to raise the drive so that it is level along the house front, as he did not like the sloping grade line. We asked my opinion on this and on two or three other smaller matters, and I could hardly avoid answering him although I realized the impropriety of doing so when out of your employ. I trust you will see in my action merely the promptings of interest in an old job, accompanied by no thought or desire of intruding myself where I might not be wanted.

Mr. Murphy has just returned from New Jersey, where he has been working, as you may be aware, at camouflaging ships. I do not think he will do much here on his place this winter, and I am sure he would appreciate a visit from you before spring.

Yours very truly,
W. L. Phillips

Mr. F. L. Olmsted
Washington, D. C.

HAROLD H. HATHAWAY
JUL 9 9 03 AM '18
HATHAWAY & VINING
ARCHITECTS
12 BRADDOCK ST., BOSTON
323600
JUL 9 9 03 AM '18
October 18th 1918

Olmsted Brothers
Brookline
Massachusetts

Gentlemen

I sent you a set of plans for Mr. Murphy's house about three months ago at your request.

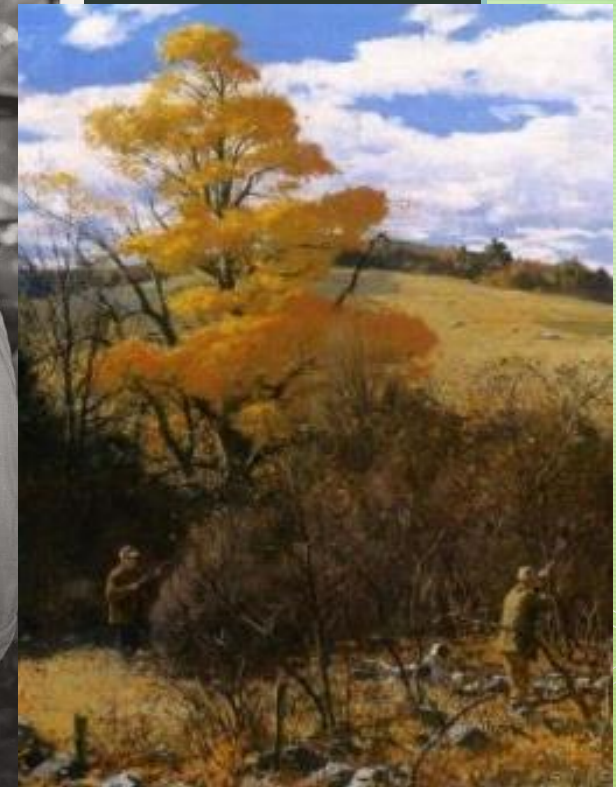
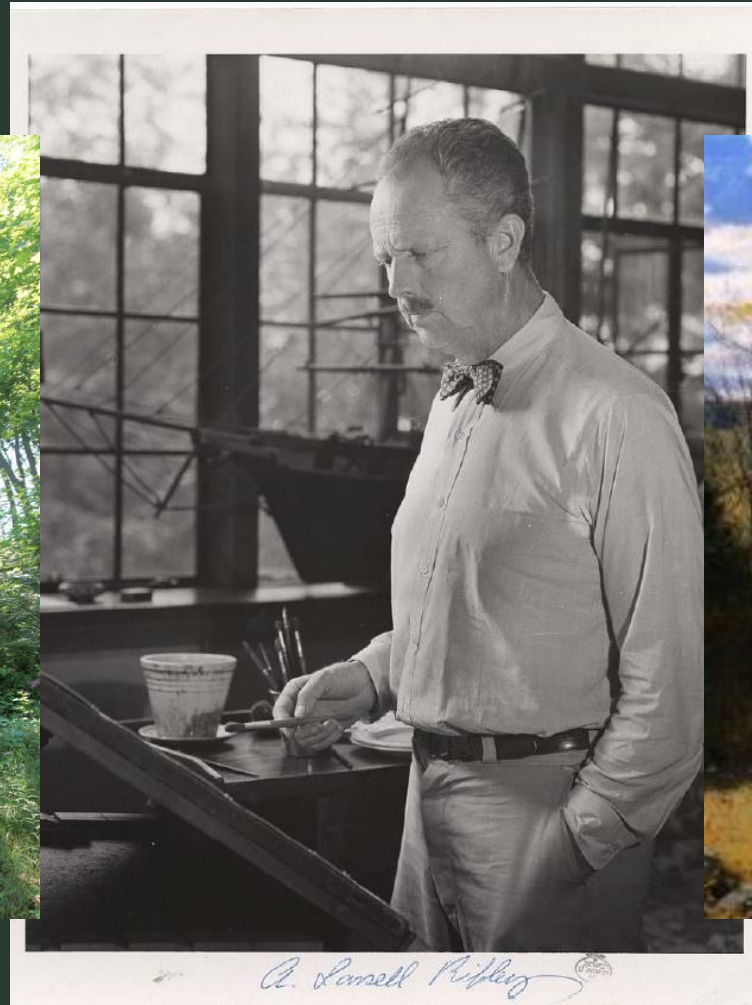
Will you please see if you have them.

Yours truly,
H. H. Hathaway

H. H. H.

52 Follen Road

Aiden Lassell Ripley, Artist





National Register for 12 Summit & 52 Follen

- “the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) have reviewed the Certified Local Government (CLG) National Register Eligibility Opinion. . .
- regarding the Hermann Dudley Murphy House, 12 Summit Road, Lexington (MHC #LEX.521)
- and concurs with the Lexington Historical Commission that the property is eligible for listing in the National Register”



Historically Significant Listed Buildings

wn Lexington

dress 12 Summit Road

storic Name Dudley Murphy House

e: Present residence

Original residence and studio

DESCRIPTION:

te 1919

Source plans

Style Florentine Villa

Architect Harold W. Hathaway

Exterior wall fabric stucco

SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north.



Boundaries set to
protect those historic
resources and the
surrounding landscape

wn Lexington

dress 12 Summit Road

storic Name Dudley Murphy House

e: Present residence

Original residence and studio

DESCRIPTION:

te 1919

Source plans

Style Medieval

Architect Harold W. Hathaway

Exterior wall fabric stucco

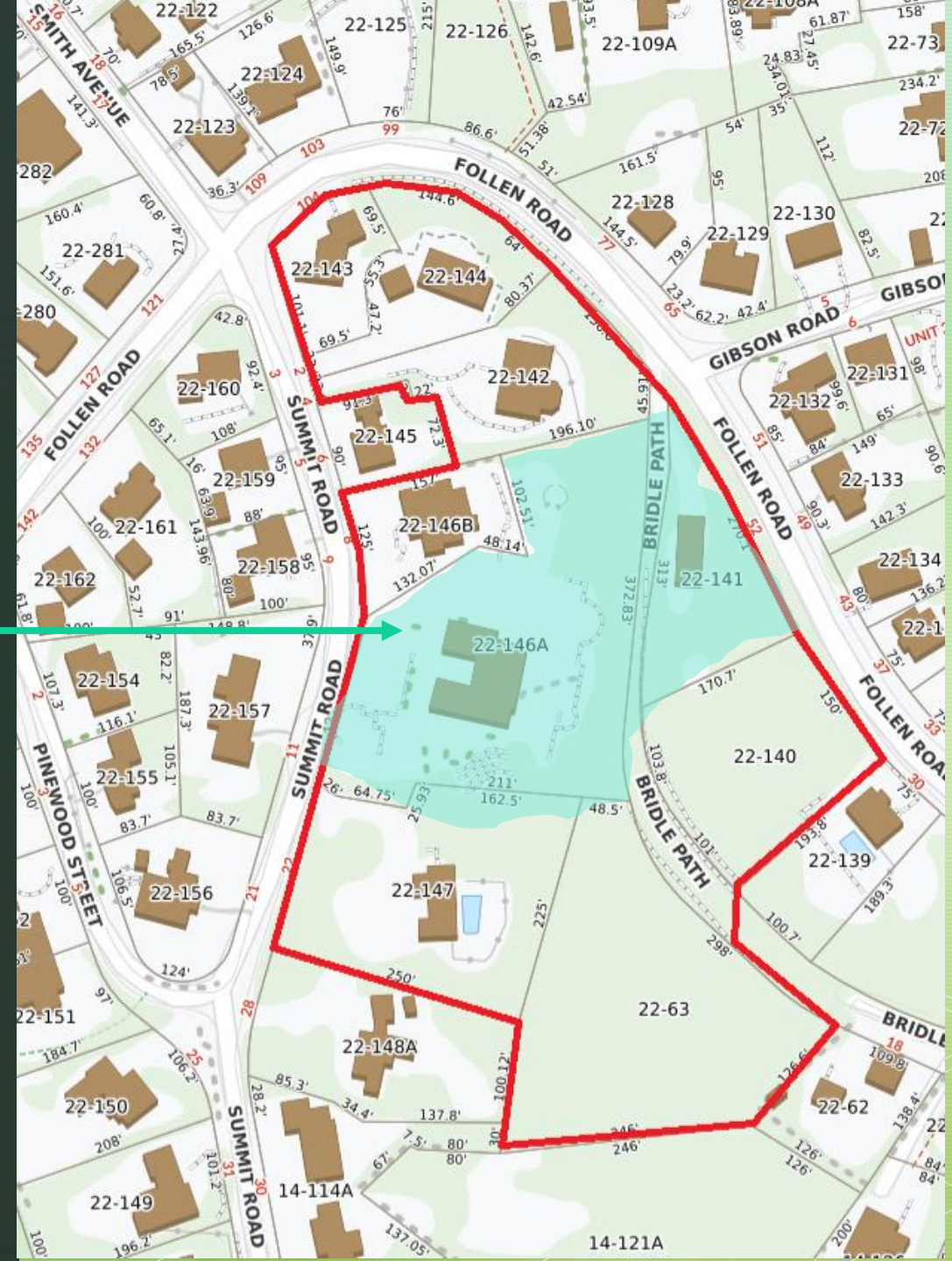
SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation
to nearest cross streets and/or
geographical features. Indicate
all buildings between inventoried
property and nearest intersection.
Indicate north.

New District Boundaries

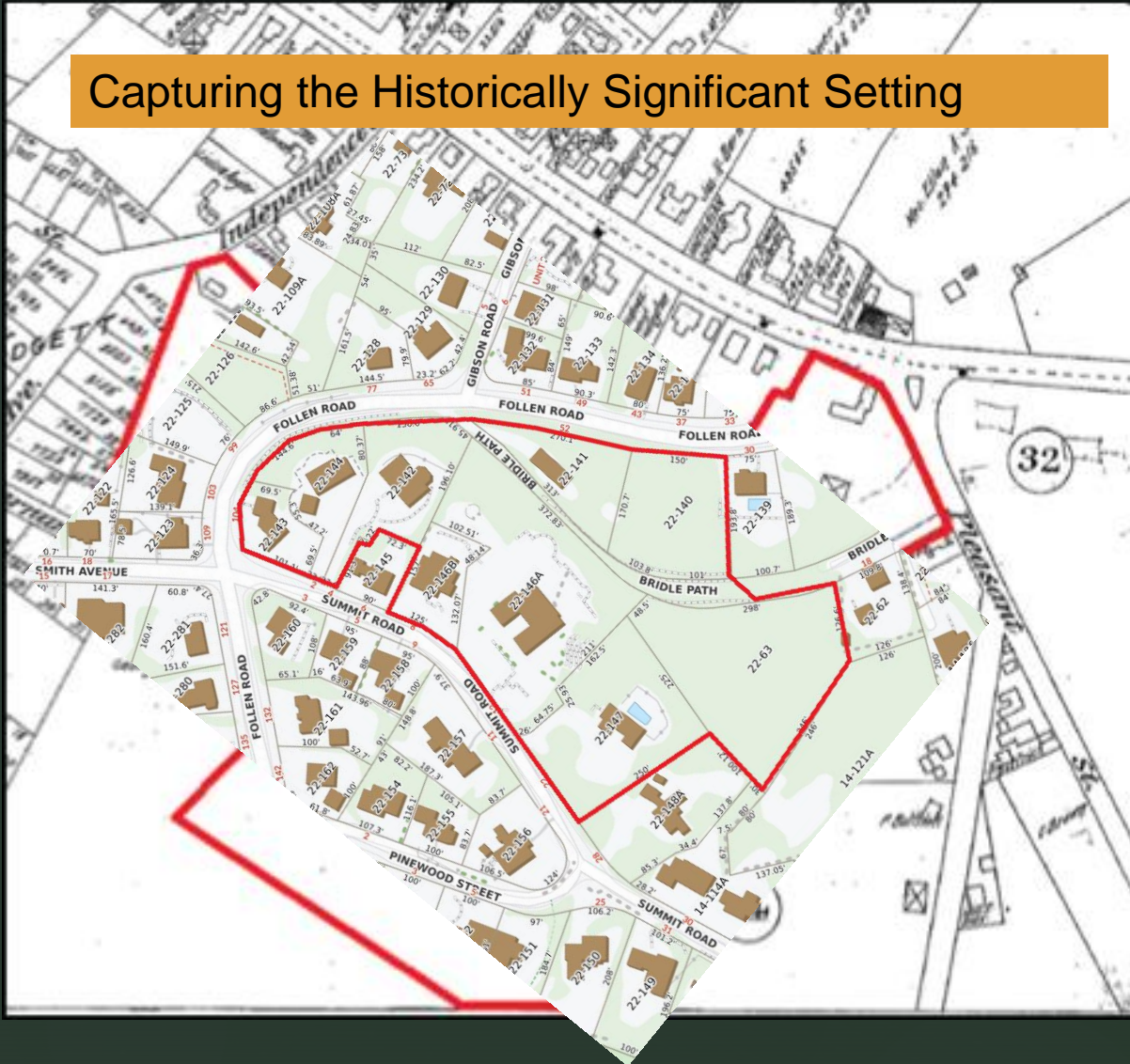
Properties could be included in the future, expanding the boundaries

New District Boundaries



1898 Map of the Robbins Estate & The Proposed New Historic District

Capturing the Historically Significant Setting



Eli Robbins (1786-1856) Mt. Independence



Timeline of Mt. Independence

Dec.
2020



12 Summit purchased by a developer and plans are filed for demolition of the home.

Historical Commission votes for one year demolition delay

Concerned residents send a letter to the developer, expressing their alarm, and they begin to meet to discuss creation of a local historic district to make sure the development at 12 Summit is respectful of its history and value to the community

A preliminary report is sent to State for a 60 day review, to determine if the properties are worthy of protective oversight

Mass. Historical Commission (under Secretary Galvin) votes unanimously to encourage Lexington to create the local historic district

Nov.
2021

Town Meeting Members are asked to support the residents' request to establish a district

Timeline of Mt. Independence

Dec.
2020

12 Summit purchased by a developer and plans are filed for demolition of the home.



Historical Commission votes for one year demolition delay

Concerned residents send a letter to the developer, expressing their alarm, and they begin to meet to discuss creation of a local historic district to make sure the development at 12 Summit is respectful of its history and value to the community

A preliminary report is sent to State for a 60 day review, to determine if the properties are worthy of protective oversight

Mass. Historical Commission (under Secretary Galvin) votes unanimously to encourage Lexington to create the local historic district

Nov.
2021

Town Meeting Members are asked to support the residents' request to establish a district

Timeline of Mt. Independence

Dec.
2020

12 Summit purchased by a developer and plans are filed for demolition of the home.

Historical Commission votes for one year demolition delay



Concerned residents send a letter to the developer, expressing their alarm, and they begin to meet to discuss creation of a local historic district to make sure the development at 12 Summit is respectful of its history and value to the community

A preliminary report is sent to State for a 60 day review, to determine if the properties are worthy of protective oversight

Mass. Historical Commission (under Secretary Galvin) votes unanimously to encourage Lexington to create the local historic district

Nov.
2021

Town Meeting Members are asked to support the residents' request to establish a district

Timeline of Mt. Independence

Dec.
2020

12 Summit purchased by a developer and plans are filed for demolition of the home.

Historical Commission votes for one year demolition delay

Concerned residents send a letter to the developer, expressing their alarm, and they begin to meet to discuss creation of a local historic district to make sure the development at 12 Summit is respectful of its history and value to the community



A preliminary report is sent to State for a 60 day review, to determine if the properties are worthy of protective oversight

Mass. Historical Commission (under Secretary Galvin) votes unanimously to encourage Lexington to create the local historic district

Nov.
2021

Town Meeting Members are asked to support the residents' request to establish a district

Timeline of Mt. Independence

Dec.
2020

12 Summit purchased by a developer and plans are filed for demolition of the home.

Historical Commission votes for one year demolition delay

Concerned residents send a letter to the developer, expressing their alarm, and they begin to meet to discuss creation of a local historic district to make sure the development at 12 Summit is respectful of its history and value to the community

A preliminary report is sent to State for a 60 day review, to determine if the properties are worthy of protective oversight



Mass. Historical Commission (under Secretary Galvin) votes unanimously to encourage Lexington to create the local historic district

Nov.
2021

Town Meeting Members are asked to support the residents' request to establish a district

Timeline of Mt. Independence

Dec.
2020

12 Summit purchased by a developer and plans are filed for demolition of the home.

Historical Commission votes for one year demolition delay

Concerned residents send a letter to the developer, expressing their alarm, and they begin to meet to discuss creation of a local historic district to make sure the development at 12 Summit is respectful of its history and value to the community

A preliminary report is sent to State for a 60 day review, to determine if the properties are worthy of protective oversight

Mass. Historical Commission (under Secretary Galvin) votes unanimously to encourage Lexington to create the local historic district

Nov.
2021



Town Meeting Members are asked to support the residents' request to establish a district

The new district created will be administered by
Lexington's existing
Historic Districts Commission

HDC Oversight



- ✓ HDC review is an additional layer on top of zoning

HDC Oversight

- ✓ HDC review is an additional layer on top of zoning
- ✓ Emphasis on appropriate materials and quality for an historic district

HDC Oversight

- ✓ HDC review is an additional layer on top of zoning
- ✓ Emphasis on appropriate materials and quality for an historic district



A Local Historic District

- Is NOT a tourist attraction
- Is NOT frozen in time
- IS about development and change that is sensitive to historic buildings and their settings

A Local Historic District has no real effect on the rest of the neighborhood, except home values are generally higher in and around historic districts.



A Local Historic District

The goal is not to stop the development at
12 Summit

but to assure it is appropriate


The Importance of Historic Preservation

▼ What Do Historic Properties Mean to All of Us?

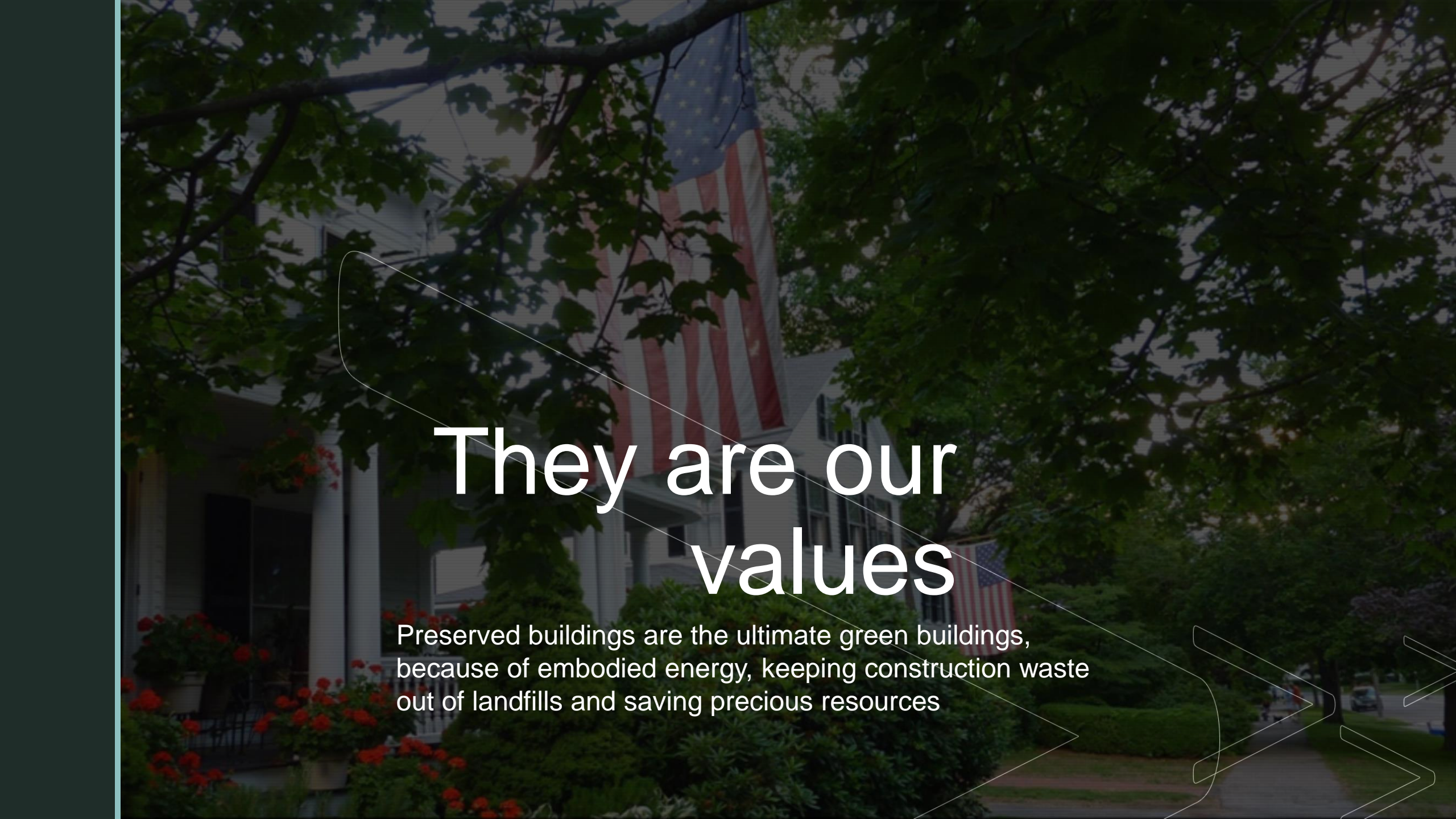
Preserving some of these
historic properties creates a
meaningful setting for all of us
in Lexington —
children and adults,
visitors and residents

not just the immediate
neighborhood





Historic properties enrich all our lives—
We can record history, but real places of meaning
need to be preserved.
And you don't know what you've lost until it's gone



They are our values

Preserved buildings are the ultimate green buildings,
because of embodied energy, keeping construction waste
out of landfills and saving precious resources

The HDC Study Committee
submitted the Preliminary

- ▶ Report on Mt. Independence to
the Planning Board for review
and recommendations, as per
MGL 40C, in June 2021. In the
end, the Planning Board chose
not to take an official position on
Mt. Independence, Article 9.

- ▶ The HDC Study Committee also submitted the Preliminary Report on Mt. Independence to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, for their review and recommendations, as per MGL 40C, also in June 2021.

Recommendations



Massachusetts Historical Commission Staff

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the Mount Independence Local Historic District and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the Town of Lexington to establish the Mount Independence Local Historic District.

8 September 2021

Unanimous State Vote of Support

Remember to read the Final Report on the
proposal to create the
Mt. Independence Local Historic District

Click the link
at the HDC's
website



Article

To see if the Town will vote to:
(a) establish a Mt. Independence Historic District to be administered by the Lexington Historic Districts Commission pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40C, Sections 3 and 4; and

▀ (b) add a new Chapter to the Town's Code of Bylaws to govern said Mt. Independence Historic District and other future historic districts established pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40C; or act in any other manner in relation thereto.

Mt. Independence



FAQ's Frequently-Asked-Questions

Q & A

First, some clarifications

Plans were filed for the demolition of the historic home at 12 Summit, triggering a one year demolition delay from the Historical Commission (HC).



What was the motivation behind this initiative?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

A similar trigger years ago led to the creation of Minuteman National Park.



What was the motivation behind this initiative?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The residents of the Follen Hill area researched and wrote the history of their area and presented this initial write-up to the Select Board with a request to appoint the HDC Study Committee.



What was the process that went into this effort?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

In response, the Select Board appoint the existing HDC as the study committee.



What was the process that went into this effort?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The residents then hired an architectural historian to document the historic properties and write a broader assessment , which was forwarded to the HDC.



What was the process that went into this effort?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

After site visits and review, the HDC found the properties architecturally & historically significant and took the case to the Mass Historical Commission for review and recommendations.



What was the process that went into this effort?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The proposal for a local historic district started with determination of National Register eligibility for 12 Summit road and 52 Follen by the Mass Historical Commission.



How were the boundaries set?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

These two national register eligible properties became the center of the historic district. Additional research determined the historic significance of 3 additional properties.



How were the boundaries set?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

Two contemporary houses and two wooded lots were added to the proposed district for boundary protection.



How were the boundaries set?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The neighbors considered forming an NCD but rejected the idea, preferring the greater oversight that an historic district would provide.



Why didn't the neighborhood request a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) instead?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

HDC reviews *architecture*, with no preference or say on use. There may be other forces promoting or preventing affordable housing, but the HDC is not among them.



Does the proposed district prevent affordable/inclusionary housing?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The architecture is unique and has historical worth. It will be otherwise lost.



How does the Town benefit from establishing this district?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The Mt. Independence proposal has taken the normal amount of time to have full review by all boards, committees and commissions, including the lengthy State review.



Is this project rushed?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

This proposal was initiated by the residents, who brought it to the Select Board for consideration. The HDC has no plans for further historic districts.



Does the HDC plan other new districts?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The HDC is very supportive of public housing, and even championed a move of the Hosmer House to 3 Harrington to include public housing.



Is the HDC pro public housing?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

12 Summit is a unique Italian Villa by the architect Harold Hathaway in a landscape designed by the Frederick Law Olmsted's firm.



What makes 12 Summit historically significant?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

And the residents were
major artists of the early
20th Century.



What makes 12 Summit
historically significant?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

That property, 8
Summit, directly abuts
the historically
significant property.



Then why did the HDC
decide to include one
more property in
October?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

There is zero effect on anyone outside the new district, even right next door or across the street.



What's the effect on the other neighbors?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The historic stone walls of Bridle Path are being catalogued right now, and general clearing of overgrowth will begin to carefully preserve them.



Are there plans to clear Bridle Path?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

Mass General Law 40C has a current process to create new historic districts, while Lexington's original legislation (which will continue to operate) is outdated.



Why is the Town using 40C legislation to create the new district?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

Hundreds of new local historic districts have been created using this process. A little over half (54%) are single building districts.



How many other towns or cities have tried this?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

This is new to
Lexington, after our
original 4 districts
created in the 1950's,
but not new at all across
the Commonwealth.



How many other towns
or cities have tried this?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

Somerville just created a large new district with 200 homes, but that was unusual. They have done single building districts recently. Brookline has created eight in the last couple of years.



How many other towns or cities have tried this?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

Actually, it's the opposite. Most new local historic districts are small, the majority are just one historic building.



Is this new district small compared to others being created now?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

All of the properties which border the 2 National Register-eligible properties are included, as well as individually architecturally significant properties (104 Follen and 2 Summit).



What criteria were used to include the current properties?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

Bordering properties
include the 2
contemporary houses
and wooded lots.



What criteria were used
to include the current
properties?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

Good guidance used by other communities is to have 80% of the properties opting into a new district. In this case, it's 89% (8 of the 9 properties).



But the developer didn't ask to join an historic district, did he?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The residents are not against development. They would like oversight over the development in an historically sensitive site.



Is this just a way for the residents to stop more development?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The two wooded lots will be developed at some point in the future. The current owner plans affordable housing on one and conservation land use for the other.



What about other developments in the new district?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The HDC is very supportive of these plans.



What about other developments in the new district?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The HDC asks that properties within an historic district be maintained in good repair.



How does the HDC insist on maintenance?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

Historic Districts include historic resources and some of the surrounding setting. All of Mass Ave is in Districts and includes a wide mix of ages and styles.



Some of the homes included in this district are new or at least not historic. Why?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

An historic district is not about enforcing one style or age. It is about the appropriateness of each individual design.



Some of the homes included in this district are new or at least not historic. Why?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

If their homes are historically significant, of course they can go to the Select Board with a request. The long and careful process will be followed.



Would my neighbors be able to apply to become an historic district?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

The HDC chair has had a long conversation with Ozan, and he explained he works within historic districts regularly.



Is the developer hostile to the new district?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

He even sent some samples of his recent work in a Brookline historic district.



Is the developer hostile to the new district?

Q & A

First, some clarifications

You can see they're lovely and building in a district is a success.



Is the developer hostile to the new district?

Q & A

First, some clarifications